

Star SPORT

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Fergie fuming at Olympic shortlist

Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson is fuming after being told Wayne Rooney is on the shortlist for the Great Britain squad at the London Olympics despite the striker being widely expected to go to Euro 2012 with England.

"It's serious, this is the start of the season we are talking about. It's ridiculous," Ferguson told British newspapers on Sunday, annoyed that Rooney and nine other United players are on the 80-man shortlist drawn up by Games coach Stuart Pearce, who is also caretaker England manager.

- AFP



Siddikur finishes 14th

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman finished on joint 14th position as Englishman Lee Westwood successfully defended his title at the CIMB Niaga Indonesian Masters yesterday.

Siddikur endured his best day at the Royale Jakarta Golf Club yesterday, as he finished the front-nine of the third round with four birdies for a 5-under-par finish. Then Siddikur played a one-under-par fourth round with five birdies, two bogeys and a double bogey as he finished the event on 6-under-par 282.

For his last day exploits, Siddikur won a 10,000 paychèque, which kept him in previous ninth position in the Asian Order of Merit. Siddikur's next challenge will be at the Ballentine's Championship in Seoul, Korea which starts on Thursday.

Meanwhile, the defending champion Westwood completed a marathon of 32 holes as he returned on Sunday morning to finish the third round before closing with a final round two-over-par 74 for a winning total of 16-under-par 272.

The Englishman defeated former Asian Tour number one Thaworn Wiratchant of Thailand, who returned with a 67, by two shots while India's

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AHF CUP HOCKEY Bangladesh's semi against SL today

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Bangladesh will take on Sri Lanka in the first semifinal of the AHF Cup Hockey Tournament in Bangkok, Thailand today, with one eye on Tuesday's final. A win in this match will also ensure an Asia Cup ticket for the men in red and green.

Bangladesh have been in sparkling form in the tournament so far, winning all three of their matches, by big margin.

Bangladesh won their opening match against Chinese Taipei by 4-2 goals before defeating Singapore 4-1. The biggest victory came in their last group match (9-0) against Thailand which saw them emerge as Group B champions.

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PHOTO: AFP

Spain's Rafael Nadal bites his trophy after winning the Monte Carlo Masters final against world number one Novak Djokovic of Serbia in Monaco on Sunday. Nadal won 6-3, 6-1.

Rafa makes Monte Carlo his own

Tennis

AFP, Monte Carlo

Rafael Nadal won an unprecedented eighth straight title at the Monte Carlo Masters on Sunday, defeating Novak Djokovic 6-3, 6-1.

The victory also marked the end of a seven-match losing streak in finals to the Serb world number one, whose last victory over Nadal came in a six-hour Australian Open final.

Nadal's victory was his 42nd in a row at the Mediterranean venue and marks his 47th career trophy and 20th in a Masters 1000 tournament, the first to achieve that honour.

The win was also his first ATP trophy since winning Roland Garros last June.

"I've always felt unbelievable here," said an emotional Nadal. "It's unbelievable to win this historic tournament eight times. I always feel great when I come here."

"I had lost to Novak seven times, so losing eight would not have been much different. But to win this one makes a big difference."

"Hopefully I will stay healthy and go to Barcelona (next week) and play a good tournament."

Djokovic won the first game of the match to love but slowly found himself losing grip at the cliffside club on the shores of the Mediterranean.

Djokovic, who also played and lost the 2009 final against Nadal, and was competing this week after learning of the death of his grandfather in Serbia. He had rallied from a set down in two of his four previous rounds.

The Serb world number one was playing in his 45th ATP final and now stands 30-15. He trails Nadal 14-17 in their career series. Monte Carlo is one of only two Masters 1000 tournament that Djokovic has not won (Cincinnati is the other).

Djokovic stands 24-3 on the season with titles at the Australian Open and Miami.

Nadal advanced as he fired his only ace of the final on match point after saving the lone break point he had faced two games earlier.

The Spanish winner now owns a 44-1 record in the principality, with titles in eight of his nine appearances.

CSA to consider BCB offer

If yes, series possible in South Africa only

Cricket

CRICINFO, Johannesburg

Cricket South Africa (CSA) is considering a request from the Bangladesh board president Mustafa Kamal for South Africa to play Bangladesh in May, CSA's acting chief executive Jacques Faul has said. Kamal made a request to CSA president Willie Basson last week and offered to pay all the costs, whether the series takes place in Bangladesh or South Africa.

But the matches are unlikely to be held in Bangladesh because of the summer heat and Faul confirmed South Africa, where it will be winter in May, was the only possibility as a venue. "Winter will be a factor for sure," Faul told ESPNcricinfo. "Durban is a possible venue but the Highveld [Johannesburg and Centurion] will be out." Cape Town, where in rains in winter, will also not be a possibility.

But he was quite positive about the series being held with the request from Kamal being three ODIs and five T20s.

"We have received the request and we are in the process of checking whether it would be possible. We've got nothing against it, it's just about scheduling. At the moment, I can say it is a request we are looking at."

Faul will meet with the South African Cricketers' Association (SACA) and national coach Gary Kirsten next week to discuss the possibility of playing the series. He said the decision will be based on South Africa's schedule and whether this fixture can be included without causing fatigue. "We always want to play cricket and foster cricket but we've got to be careful with how much preparation and how much rest we give our team," Faul said. "It is quite important how we pace the team."

Bangladesh have no international cricket scheduled before the World Twenty20 in September. Their trip to Pakistan, for an ODI and a T20 later this

month, was put on hold after a court order placed a four-week embargo on the tour, and their visit to Zimbabwe in August was postponed because of work being done on the pitches in Harare and Bulawayo.

By contrast, South Africa's schedule is busy. Having already spent a month in New Zealand, they will go to England for more than two months in early July, head straight to Sri Lanka for the World T20, tour Australia in October and November and then host New Zealand during the home summer.

Even if all parties agree the Bangladesh-South Africa series should

go ahead, it will face a number of logistical problems. With the IPL only ending on May 27, South Africa could be without some of their key players. Twenty South African players, including limited-overs captain AB de Villiers and bowlers Dale Steyn and Morne Morkel, are involved in the IPL.

Bangladesh, though, only have two players in the competition - Shakib Al Hasan and Tamim Iqbal.

With location being an issue, another option would be for the series to be held in Zimbabwe, who were approached by the BCB to participate in a tri-series with South Africa. While Zimbabwe Cricket officials could not be reached on Sunday for confirmation on whether they received the request and were considering

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NCL matches to continue today

SPORTS REPORTER



The two National Cricket League (NCL) matches will resume today despite the dawn-to-dusk hartal called for the second day in a row across the country.

It will be the third day of the second phase matches between Rajshahi and Sylhet at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur and Dhaka Metro and Khulna at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium. Both matches were held up due to the strike yesterday, but it was decided on Saturday, the second day of the matches, that even if the strike continued, the match would continue from today.

"We told the teams and officials that even if the strike went into Monday, the matches would continue," said Gazi Ashraf Hossain, the tournament committee chairman of Bangladesh Cricket Board.

Though it won't be too troublesome for the Rajshahi and Sylhet players to reach the ground on time as they have been

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PHOTO: STAR

Local boys indulge in a game of cricket on a near-empty North South Road in old Dhaka during yesterday's hartal.



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Vendors have assembled fancy toys for a Baishakhi Mela to be held at the vicinity of the Laldighi Maidan in Chittagong, centring the traditional Jabbarer Boli Khela which will be held on April 25.

Jabbarer Boli Khela from tomorrow

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

The 103rd edition of the historic wrestling competition 'Jabbarer Boli Khela' will be held tomorrow at Laldighi Maidan in the port city.

The organisers said around a hundred bolis (wrestlers) from different villages and upazilas will take part in this year's competition.

At the inception of the wrestling competition, it inspired the youths to take part in the anti-British movement and to foster a daredevil mentality to combat colonial rule. A merchant by the name of Jabbar Sawdagar arranged the first wrestling competition at the ground in 1909.

"Already we took all kind of preparation and a committee of 101 members will work to hold the fair successfully," said Shwokat Anwar Badal, grandson of Jabbar and also the general secretary of the Jabbarer Boli

Khela and Baishakhi Mela Parishad.

To mark the occasion a three-day long Baishakhi Mela, which is supposed to be held over April 24-26, has already begun in the city amid much fanfare. Hundreds of makeshift shops were set up from Laldighi to the Kotwali intersection.

Traders from different parts of the country gathered here to sell their commodities including handicrafts, toys, huge variety of homemade traditional products, pottery, handlooms, textile garments, and showpieces. Home-produced conventional sweetmeats and seasonal fruits are also a highlight at the fair. Thousands of city dwellers as well as visitors from far distances thronged the first day of the fair.

"Although formally the fair is scheduled to be held for three days over April 24-26, it has already started and will actually conclude 3-4 after the formal ending," informed Badal.

BFF ELECTION Salahuddin, Rahim in presidential battle

SPORTS REPORTER

BFF's incumbent president Kazi Salahuddin will be facing Abdur Rahim for the post of presidency on the April 30 elections as two other candidates withdrew their names on the last day of withdrawal on Sunday. Shadin Bangla Football Team captain Zakaria Pintu and Shariatpur DFA councillor and journalist Mojammel Haque Chanchal withdrew their names, leaving Salahuddin and Rahim as the two candidates for the BFF hot seat.

Salahuddin is leading the

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